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## READINGS.

**GARMENTS OF THE DEAD.**—The obstinacy with which savage beliefs are retained by the rural population of Europe is illustrated by an item presented in the "*Revue des Traditions Populaires*," 1900, p. 323.

"In the part of the *arrondissement* of Dinan which lies near the sea, it is believed that people will rise dressed after the manner in which they have been interred; for this reason, when a very poor person dies, demand is made on charitable souls to furnish a garment suitable to replace his rags. Lately a well-to-do peasant ordered his heirs to put at his side in the coffin a large umbrella of blue cotton. To pass to the other side is to cross the sea, and many suppose that the coffins float on an interior sea in order to go to the other world; the good man wanted his umbrella to use for a sail."

**LOVE-CHARMS AT WISHING-WELLS.**—On page 490 of the same Journal, some account is given of the practices usual in the department of the Var.

"At Ollioules, maidens dip in the hollow of their hand a little water from the spring called Bonnefont, and present it to the young men. In case the latter so much as touch the lips, they are forced to love their unsuspected enchanter.

"At Montrieux, the girl who desires to take a husband offers an oak-leaf to the capricious current of a brook. If the water carries off her frail burden, it means happiness in the union; if, on the contrary, the leaf delays its course, and revolves in uncertainty, the presage is one of misfortune, it is the austere coif of Saint Catherine which appears on the horizon. At the well of Capeau, the beliefs and practices are identical; but the leaf is replaced by a prosaic pin."

**FAIRIES AS FISHES.**—A story of superstition narrated in the same Journal, p. 549, appears to retain of a trace of the animal nature of spirits believed to exist in fairy wells. The collector has entitled the tale "*Le poisson merveilleux*."

"Long ago, in the youth of my grandmother's great-grandmother, the youths and maidens met together in order to fish in the ponds of Guébriand, where was to be found a marvellous fish, which was a fairy. This fish was brilliant, and illuminated the neighboring water with the brightness of ten candles. No one attempted to capture him, for they knew that this was impossible, but such as had the luck to see him were fortunate during a whole year, and any one who could put his finger in the water, brightened by his rays, would be so his life long. One night a malefactor attempted to get possession of the fish, thinking that such ownership would procure him infinite riches. He was punished, for he drowned himself; but from that day the beautiful fish of light has never been seen; it is known throughout the country that he drew into the subterranean water the person who attempted to take him; the proof is that the body has never been

discovered, and that for years the water in the place where it disappeared remained black. Assuredly it was that the gate of the subterranean waters would not close, and demanded other victims. From that time the fairy fish has never been, but in the country it is believed that he will return when the world shall be better than it now is."

A note informs us that in many parts of Brittany it is believed that below the surface of the earth exists an underground sea.

**SOME HOMELY VIANDS.** — In "The American Kitchen Magazine" (Boston), October, 1900, Mrs. F. D. Bergen gives information concerning certain traditional sorts of food, which, as belonging to a state of society which has so rapidly passed away, may have interest as folk-lore.

"Many persons have heard of the famous Maryland biscuit or beaten biscuit. Some years ago I boarded for a time in a great mansion farmhouse on the eastern shore of Maryland. We not only had these biscuits served daily at table, but we were fortunate enough to witness the entire process of making. The dough is made of wheat flour, mixed with lard, with a very small quantity of cold water. The ingredients, whose exact proportions I do not know, are mixed together, then the mass of dough is put on a clean block of wood, and the whole is pounded vigorously with an axe for a considerable time. The initiated can tell by the appearance of the dough when it has been sufficiently beaten. I well remember hearing a dull, intermittent thumping that lasted throughout a good part of a late summer afternoon. At last I asked what was the occasion of the muffled thud. Upon being told it was the pounding of the dough, we went to see. There stood Pete, the most indolent mulatto boy on the premises. He struck one heavy sluggish blow, then took a long rest, then gave another blow, and so on and so on. My question caused our hostess to step out into the back yard and hurry the boy with his work, as the biscuits were to be baked in time for the early farm supper. They were served hot soon after they were baked, but those that remained were afterwards put on the table cold. The Marylanders are very fond of these biscuits either hot or cold, and certainly when fresh they are very toothsome, though undoubtedly hygienic objections might properly be urged against them as a frequent article of diet.

"The hoe-cake of the old plantation days is still made in many parts of the Southern States, though on account of the general substitution of cooking stoves for the open fireplaces of earlier times, modifications naturally have come about in regard to baking this simple cornbread, of which, when made by the hand of cunning, one seldom tires. The name, it is said, was given because the cake, made of meal, salt, and water, was often done brown on a hoe held in front of the glowing coals or possibly over a bed of these. I have heard men from the North, who travelled through Arkansas before the introduction of railroads, say that no ordinary bread could ever compare with the hoe-cake baked on a hot board stood aslant before a great, blazing wood fire, with which they had been entertained in her log-cabin by some old mammy. To-day cakes made in the same way are com-

monly, throughout the South, baked on round griddles heated and set on top of the stove. In the backwoods of Missouri, a quarter of a century ago, the general mode of cooking cornbread was to empty the mixture of corn-meal and water, with a little salt, into a large, heavy cast-iron frying-pan (the 'skillet' of the South and West, the 'spider' of New England) which for this use was provided with a cast-iron lid. The coals and ashes of the fire-place were then scraped aside, and the covered skillet was placed on the heated bricks where they had lain. Hot coals and ashes were then heaped on the skillet, and it was left so covered until its contents were judged to be sufficiently baked. Cornbread made in this way was sometimes fairly good, but it lacked the crisp browned surface and the flavor of the pone or hoe-cake baked by exposure to the direct radiation from an open fire.

"Wheaten griddle cakes of a kind very common in Northern Ohio thirty years and more ago and still in somewhat general use are called 'flannel cakes.' The ingredients are about the same, I think, as for waffles, but the cakes are baked on a hot griddle on top of the stove. The yolks of many eggs are beaten into the thin batter of flour and sour milk, while the whites of the eggs, after being beaten to a stiff froth are not stirred in until the moment before the cooking begins. The batter is of course lightened with either soda or saleratus, and the beaten white of the eggs puffs up as the cakes quickly cook. Possibly it is these light soft lumps, scattered through the cakes, that gave the name of 'flannel' to them. I have often seen a tall stack of these thin cakes each one buttered and sprinkled with sugar as it was put in place, served as a company dish for supper. Usually, however, they are made for breakfast, and are brought on to the table hot, a few at a time, fresh from the griddle. In one rural household I recall how oftentimes a kind old domestic would tempt the appetite of a child who was not hungry by saying, 'let me bake you dollar-coke.' Then she would return to the kitchen and soon reappear with a tiny cake, really of about the dimensions of a silver dollar.

"In our own family I remember a sort of a fritter which we often had as a breakfast dish. The original name, I believe, had been 'lengthened eggs.' The recipe had been obtained either from some almanac or farmer's paper. Some one had misunderstood the name, and had quoted it as 'linkum davies,' and forever after the dish was known in the family and among relatives and neighbors by that name. The fritters were made by beating together eggs, sweet milk, and flour into a thin batter. The batter was seasoned with salt, then it was fried, a spoonful at a time, in a deep skillet of hot lard. I have often wondered whether the recipe survives elsewhere under the local name which arose by accident.

"Here is an Ohio recipe for a kind of fried cakes known as wafers. 'Beat well three eggs. Add a pinch of salt and knead with flour into a stiff dough. Take a little bit of the dough, a piece perhaps the size of a hickory nut, roll this very thin and fry in hot lard just as one fries dough-nuts. As each cake or wafer is lifted from the kettle of fat powdered sugar should be sifted over it.' Usually these thin, round cakes are piled

one on top of the other. They are eaten instead of cake at supper, or are often served as lunch between meals or at picnics. As the very thin, round piece of dough cooks, the surface puffs up into little blisters. When we were children, we liked to watch the preparation of these wafers and to see the blisters puffing up over the surface of the dough. We used to call them toad-cakes, on account of this warty appearance."

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## NOTES AND QUERIES.

DAKOTA LEGEND OF THE HEAD OF GOLD. — In a posthumous work, "Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography" ("Contributions to North American Ethnology," vol. ix.), J. Owen Dorsey has presented this legend, an Indian myth written in the Dakota language by Walking Elk, a Yankton Dakota. Mr. Dorsey's translation is as follows (pp. 105-109): —

A man had four children. And they were all young men, but they were poor and seemed as if they would die of thriftlessness. And the old man said, "Behold, old woman, my youngest child I have the greatest pity for, and I dislike to have him die of poverty. See here; let us seek the Great Spirit, and if we find him, lo, I will give him to train up well for me."

The old woman replied, "Yes, old man, you say well, we will do so." And so immediately they went to the westward, seeking the Great Spirit, and they came on to a very high hill; and as they came to it, behold, another man came there also.

And this man said, "For what are you seeking?" And the old man said, "Alas, my friend, my child whom I pity I want to give to the Great Spirit, and so I am seeking him." And he said, "Yes, friend, I am the Great Spirit. My friend, give him to me, and I will go home with him." (That is, "I will take him to my home.")

And so when he (the father) had given him, he (the Great Spirit) took him home with him to a house that seemed to stand up to the clouds. Then he said, "Examine all this house as much as you like, and take good care of these horses, but do not look into the little house that stands here." Having said this, he gave him all the keys, and he added, "Yes, have a watch of this. Lo, I am going on a journey." He said this, and went away.

It was evening, and he had come with a great many men, who sat down, filling the house. When they had been there a good while, one of the men said: "The boy is good; that is enough." And saying this, he went out. In like manner all the men went home.

Then again, the man said: "Behold, I go again on a journey. Do you stay and keep watch." So again he departed.

While he was watching, it happened that one of the horses said, "Friend, go into the small house into which you are commanded not to look, and within, in the middle of the floor, stands something yellow, dip your head into that, and make haste — we two are together. When he brings home a great many men, they will eat you, as they will eat me, but I am unwilling — we two shall share the same," he said.